

THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM FO CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Huang Chen, PRC Liaison Office
 Han Hsu, Deputy Chief PRC Liaison Office
 Chi Chi'ao Chu, Interpreter PRC Liaison Office

 Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
 General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the
 President for National Security Affairs
 Winston Lord, NSC Staff

DATE AND TIME: Saturday, October 6, 1973
 9:10 - 9:30 p.m.

PLACE: Secretary Kissinger's White House Office

[The meeting was delayed because of phone calls for the Secretary. Winston Lord and the Chinese group chatted for twenty-five minutes in the West Lobby while waiting.]

Secretary Kissinger: I have nothing very special, Mr. Ambassador. I thought that since the Soviet Union is in touch with us and since Egypt is in touch with us, we should tell you what we are doing. I had a very good talk with your Vice Foreign Minister. I just wanted to give you our thinking without any request for any action.

I took very seriously what your Vice Minister said to me last week about the importance of maintaining good relations with the Arab countries. I have given a great amount of time in New York to the Arab countries.

We are always honest with you. Let me give you our basic objectives and then we can discuss tactics.

[Looking toward General Scowcroft] The Middle East is the only place in the world where our airplanes can fly.

General Scowcroft: There are clear skies and sunshine there.

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Secretary Kissinger: I always tell him he is a General in an Air Force that can fly only in good weather. They don't like to fly while it is raining. [laughter]

Our strategic objective is to prevent the Soviet Union from getting a dominant position in the Middle East. That is our basic objective. Israel is a secondary, emotional problem having to do with domestic politics here. Our objective is always, when the Soviet Union appears, to demonstrate that whoever gets help from the Soviet Union cannot achieve his objective, whatever it is. You remember that in 1970 I once said publicly that we wanted to expel the Soviet troops from the Middle East. I was criticized, but we succeeded.

The second principal objective we have in the current crisis is not to create a situation in which a country uses international disputes to attack and then ask for a ceasefire after it has gained some territory. So we advocate now a return to the status quo ante before the fighting started.

Ambassador Huang: Before what fighting started?

Secretary Kissinger: The fighting today. For today and tomorrow the Arabs think this is disadvantageous for them. They think it is asking them to give something up. By Tuesday and Wednesday if the war isn't ended, the Arabs will be pleading with us to get this for them, since within 72 to 96 hours the Arabs will be completely defeated. And we have to think of that situation, not of today's situation when they have gained a little territory.

I am not asking anything from the Chinese side. I am really explaining what we are thinking.

Ambassador Huang: It is not possible for us to do anything.

Secretary Kissinger: I am not asking you to do anything. I thought the Prime Minister and the Vice Prime Minister in New York might like to know what our thinking is as the situation develops.

So we want to say now that we are for a return to the ceasefire line, so we can say it later when Israel has broken through into Syria.

Ambassador: And what about the territory which the Israelis occupied, the Arab territory before that?

Secretary Kissinger: I was going to cover that next. [Ambassador Huang laughs.] I think I told you, Mr. Ambassador, that I only have average

intelligence by Chinese standards.

Ambassador Huang: No, we can't say that. [Laughter] Because as far as our position on the Middle East question, you are very clear. The Vice Minister explained this. There is no need to supplement that.

Secretary Kissinger: I had a good talk with him. You are in the happy position that I am not asking anything from you. This is for the information of the Prime Minister.

Ambassador Huang: I will be glad to do that.

Secretary Kissinger: That is all I am talking about. It is just in the spirit of our relationships so that you know what we are thinking. We would be glad to have any comments, but we are not asking for them.

Ambassador Huang: I don't want to make any comments because our position is already clear.

Secretary Kissinger: No, I am not asking for them.

Now the final problem you mentioned, about the territory. As you probably saw, I have had several discussions with the Arab leaders in New York. The Egyptian Foreign Minister and I agree that in the end of November we would continue our talks, after the Israeli election. Our assumption is that as the talks develop, we will have to separate ourselves from the Israeli point of view to some extent. But in order to be able to separate ourselves from Israel in diplomacy later, we have to be able to promise that in case of an attack we can give them some protection. The only way we can convince them to withdraw from occupied territory is to offer them some guarantee for the new borders after the settlement, for the borders after the settlement.

So this is where we are now, and these are the principles which will guide our policies. We will try to bring about a ceasefire and a return of the situation as it was today at noon. The latter, the return to today's situation, you can be sure that Israel will bring about for us. It is just a question of getting on the record before that because certainly it will happen within 72 to 96 hours. But in the deeper sense I tried to explain our basic strategy, and I just wanted to let you know this without asking for any support.

Ambassador Huang: Is that all?

[Secretary Kissinger indicates yes.]

I appreciate you telling this to us.

Secretary Kissinger: We are working within the spirit of our conversation at the dinner with the Vice Minister this week, because he was kind enough to make some observations about the Middle East, with many of which I agree.

Ambassador Huang: I will report what you said tonight.

Secretary Kissinger: Of course. That is all. I am sorry we had to change the time, but I have had a series of meetings, and some Arab Foreign Ministers I have talked to are not as precise in their thinking as our Chinese friends. [Laughter]

Ambassador Huang: That doesn't matter. I know you are very busy.

Secretary Kissinger: So we are meeting Thursday for lunch at the State Department.

Ambassador Huang: That is right. Thank you very much. We are looking forward to it. I know you have discussed a lot with the Vice Minister.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, it was a very good meeting.

Ambassador Huang: And as for our Middle East position, the Vice Minister made that very clear.

Secretary Kissinger: Oh, yes. This was one of the least painful conversations we have had. We are asking nothing from the Chinese, and we simply wanted you to know our thinking. And also I get lonely when I don't see any Chinese for 48 hours. [Laughter]